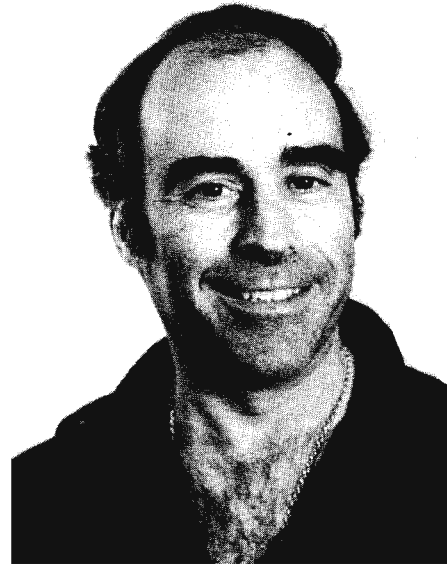


Innovations in Rolfing Session #3

Part I

by Stanley Rosenberg



I want to share with you some questions, observations, and findings about the third session of Rolfing and about body types. This is the first of three articles relating to the third session.

As time goes on, one of the things that impresses me most about the third Rolfing session is the fact that I look at the body from the side. In most massage therapies, the client lies on his/her stomach or back, but here in the third session, I look at the body from a new point of view.

If my work is to continue evolving, a relevant question is, "What more can I do from this position to further improve structure?" If I always do what I have always done, I will always get what I always got. Not that that is bad, but can I find ways to be even better?

I am in total agreement with the goals of balancing the front and back sides in relationship to the lateral line; this remains my primary objective. Visually, I examine where the body short between segments and where there is shortness in the segments. For example, is my client short on the front or back of the chest? Where does this body want to lengthen? And how does it feel under my finger—where is the stiff, gunky gel that wants to soften and melt to sol?

I allow myself room to explore beyond the "standard Rolfing third session operating procedures" which for me in the third session is: one hand on one side of the lateral line and the other simultane-

ously on the other side of the line, the same distance way. My goal should be reached from this point of departure.

I use four other concepts which go beyond the standard operating procedures in my third sessions to help me better achieve my overall goals of balancing the segments of the body in relationship to the lateral line.

The first concept about breathing spaces is very straightforward. It is a way for me to be more specific in seeing and devising workable strategies. In one interesting yoga book which a client showed me, a distinction is made between three breathing spaces of the upper, middle, and lower chest; and different asanas appropriate for opening each of the three areas are shown. When I am Rolfing the torso, I can evaluate the effectiveness of my strategy by noticing the improvement in the freedom of movement in these three spaces.

This concept of the three breathing spaces also assists me in the first session when I want to show the clients where they are at the start of the session and where they can expect improvements after we are finished. For most of my clients, the most important first session improvement will be an increase in lateral movement of the eleventh and twelfth ribs, indicating the active function of the respiratory diaphragm. However, some clients already have good lateral movement, and improvement for them will manifest in the expansion of the middle and/or the

upper chest on inspiration.

In the third session, from the side of the chest in terms of the map of acupuncture, we see the spleen meridian. It looks like a gusset and, in fact, functions like one. These lines of the gusset form an upside down "V" and sloop diagonally on either side of the center line. Tightness on one side of the "V" will shorten and constrict the movement of the ribs underneath. I work my hands on either side of the spleen meridian (not the body's lateral line) and push the skin (and superficial fascia) slightly in the direction that increases the resistance. I wait for the out-breath that releases the tension under my fingers. Splitting my hands symmetrically on the center line does not give as good result as freeing the spleen meridian in my goal to enhance the breathing movement in the middle chest.

I also work the spleen meridian with the client in different arm positions: with the elbow over the head (extension) and the elbow pulled as far back along the side of the body (flexion). These positions can also serve as the end-points of tracking.

I also work the liver and the gall bladder meridians in a similar way, my hands on either side of the meridian. □

*Part II continues in the next issue
of ROLF LINES.*